

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. SOLICITATION NUMBER:	SOL-72030618B00020
2. ISSUANCE DATE:	April 19, 2018
3. CLOSING DATE/TIME FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS:	May 04, 2018 no later than 16:30 Kabul time
4. POSITION TITLE:	Education Program Specialist
5. MARKET VALUE:	GS-13 (\$75,628 - \$98,317) Final compensation will be negotiated within the listed market value.
6. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:	The period of performance is one year, with the possibility of extensions.
7. PLACE OF PERFORMANCE:	USAID/Afghanistan
8. WHO MAY APPLY:	United States Citizens (including Permanent Residents) and Third Country (non-US, non-Afghan) Nationals*
9. SECURITY LEVEL REQUIRED:	As an employment pre-condition, the successful applicant is required to obtain a Secret clearance (if U.S. Citizen), or Moderate Risk Public Trust (MRPT) access authorization (if U.S. Permanent Resident or Third Country National)

10. STATEMENT OF DUTIES:**1) Background and General Statement of Purpose of Contract:**

With strong international assistance from the U.S. and other partners, Afghanistan has and continues to dramatically rebuild the education sector after devastation from decades of war and conflict. Access to basic education has vastly improved since 2002. During that time, the number of schools has increased from 3,400 to 16,400, and enrollment has increased from 900,000 boys in 2002 to around 9 million students today, 39% of whom are girls. The number of public school teachers in Afghanistan has also dramatically increased – from 20,000 mostly male teachers in 2001 to over 215,000 today (a third are female). Beginning in the early 1990's, the higher education system deteriorated significantly. Enrollment dropped from 24,000 in 1990, to 11,000 in 1995, and finally to less than 8,000 in 2001. Despite achievements made since 2002, including faculty strengthening and increased enrollments, the quality of higher education available today has slightly improved but still insufficient capacity and unproven quality.

Basic Education

While considerable progress has been made, public demand for education is increasing more quickly than the current system can absorb. Access to education remains a significant barrier to economic growth in the country. The Ministry of Education (MoE) reports in its National Education Strategic Plan III 2017-2021 (NESP-III) that around 3.5 million of school-aged

*Please see Section 11: Area Of Consideration

children in Afghanistan are not enrolled in school, and 1.68 million of those enrolled are considered permanently absent from the classroom. Of those that are out-of-school, the vast majority are female. In addition to security and cultural constraints, a shortage of female teachers and the deployment of qualified female teachers to rural areas are major obstacles to increasing girls' enrollment in school.

In addition to issues of access, the quality of education provided in Afghanistan, while improving, remains to be low. A major problem identified by the MoE is the inadequate number of qualified teachers available to teach in public schools. Despite an increase in the overall number of teachers, 58% do not meet minimum qualifications, some of whom did not graduate from 10th grade. There are over 18,000 school principals or district administrators in the system, many of whom are considered ineffective because they lack supervisory skills and are not well-versed in national policy. Other issues include insufficient supplies of learning materials, such as textbooks, and limited access to schooling in rural areas.

Low literacy rates and limited skills of youth are also major issues in Afghanistan. The national literacy rate stands at 38.2% although the youth literacy rate is 58%, indicating a continued positive trend. In rural areas, an average of 10% of women and 37% of men are literate. One of the main outcomes identified in the NESP-III, is to increase the national literacy rate. In addition, 60% of the population is under the age of 24. For these youth, access to quality basic education is limited and access to post-secondary educational opportunities is even more limited.

To help confront these issues, USAID has made major investments in basic education, particularly in the areas of teacher professional development, community-based education, early grade reading, textbook printing and distribution, and education management reforms, especially to improve transparency and accountability. In 2017, USAID supported the training of more than 75,000 teachers, reaching an estimated 5 million students providing access to schooling through community-based education programs in remote rural locations. In addition, USAID has strengthened capacity of the MoE improving management and oversight systems, particularly to help reduce corruption in the sector.

Higher Education

The quality of the Afghan tertiary education system was mostly sub-standard as indicated by outdated curricula, insufficient equipment, and a shortage of qualified faculty. USAID support in the last four years has helped improve quality by increasing the number of university professors attain graduate degrees, and the development of a quality assurance or accreditation system to define standards of learning (and teaching) and stipulate enforcement mechanisms. The limited and stagnant allocations to higher education are unlikely to change significantly in the near term although private colleges and universities are thriving. Thus, any major investment in improving the structure, faculty and processes of higher education would necessarily require a role for private businesses or external partners willing and able to continue involvement after USAID's investment is complete.

Since 2006, USAID has supported the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) to improve universities and the overall higher education system. USAID support included: technical assistance for a Quality Assurance and Accreditation program; signed partnerships with 13 US universities to support 32 degree programs at 11 public universities; supported the first

ever group of associate degree graduates in Afghanistan; and is providing undergraduate and graduate degree scholarships, especially to women. USAID also continued its support for the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF).

The incumbent manages, monitors, and evaluates basic and/or higher education activities; significantly contribute to coordination and engagement in project activities and reporting requirements of the Office of Education Development (OED); mentor Afghan Cooperating Country National (CCN) staff. Incumbent serves as Agreement/Contracting Officer's Representative (A/COR) and/or Activity Manager of selected USAID-funded education projects implemented by contractors, grantees, and/or host country government entities. Incumbent also provides guidance and support to select Afghan Cooperating Country National (CCN) staff to maximize their contribution to the achievement of OED's objectives. USAID-funded programs emphasize the building of capacity of the Afghan government and its people, including Afghan CCN staff employed by USAID.

2) Statement of Duties to be Performed:

1. Education Activities Oversight

- The incumbent serves as Agreement/Contracting Officer's Representative (A/COR) and/or Activity Manager of selected USAID-funded education projects implemented by contractors, grantees, and/or host country government entities.
- Serves as OED focal point for a particular technical area in education, specifically early grade reading and math, learning assessments, school management, curriculum reform and accreditation, and capacity building; cross-cutting education topics; i.e., gender, youth, etc.; and/or serve a coordination function.
- Collects and reviews quarterly and annual program and financial reports and other required deliverables from contractors, grantees, and/or host country government entities. Tracks progress and provides technical feedback and direction to ensure consistency with USAID regulations; ensures projects are on track and deliverables are acceptable; and promotes activity effectiveness and sustainability.
- Exercises independent judgment in areas such as project management and advises on mission and Afghan education policy. Work involves formulating projects, assessing program effectiveness, and investigating and analyzing a variety of unusual conditions, problems or questions, including audits.
- Reviews financial reports from contractor and grantee implementing partners with special attention to financial indicators (expenditures, pipelines, and congruity of expenditures against activities).
- Maintains databases related to the collection of information on project progress, objectives achieved and funds obligated, accrued, and disbursed.
- Responds to requests from the USAID/Washington, Congress, U.S. Embassy, MoE, MoHE, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and other entities working in the sector and drafts official correspondence.
- Drafts official USAID documentation such as Congressional presentations and briefing papers, annual reports, action/decision Memos, Project Appraisal Documents, Implementation Letters, and procurement documents in consultation with the Supervisory Education Officer and Office Director.

2. Coordination and Engagement

- The incumbent liaises with the MoE, MoHE, USAID/Washington, the interagency (military, State Department, etc.), multinationals agencies (UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank, etc.) other education donors and stakeholders, and USAID/Afghanistan offices to ensure projects are on track and in alignment with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, National Higher Education Strategic Plan, National Education Strategic Plan, USAID Education Strategy, and other U.S. and Afghanistan policies and strategies. Incumbent performs under administrative direction, with latitude for the exercise of independent judgment, work of unusual difficulty and responsibility requiring extended professional training and experience which will demonstrate leadership and marked attainments.
- Maintains contact with individuals or groups from inside and outside of USAID to influence/motivate people or groups. Incumbent must be skillful in determining the appropriate approach in negotiating and persuading others.
- Collaborates with key donors and other stakeholders working in the area of basic, higher or non-formal education.
- Builds and maintains professional relationships with Mission employees, USAID/Washington staff, consultants, implementing partners, government officials, donor agencies, and other education sector entities.
- Exercises extensive, consistent and superior judgment in managing the implementation of all aspects of his/her responsibilities, work with minimal supervision and wide latitude in planning and executing assignments with regard to the education sector.
- Works closely with Mission offices, donor organizations, and NGO implementing partners, and mid-to high-level Government of Afghanistan's officials. The incumbent is expected to use all USAID policy and procedure available at the Mission and carry out USAID A/COR responsibilities.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

- The incumbent conducts monitoring and evaluation activities and ensures projects are being successfully implemented through multi-tiered verification that includes USAID or United States Government (USG) sources, implementing partner, Government of Afghanistan, civil society, and 3rd party independent monitors.
- Participates in activity assessments and evaluations and develops program recommendations based on USAID comparative advantage; security permitting, conducts visits to project sites and reports successes as well as inconsistencies/problems; contributes to the data collection and synthesis necessary for the preparation and revision of Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP), Annual report, the Operational Plan and other required documents.
- Collects and reviews quarterly and annual program reports from contractor/grantee implementing partners, or host-country government, provides feedback on reports, and works with partner to resolve challenges and implementation issues.

4. Reporting and Conducting Presentations

- The incumbent writes reports or significant sections of reports as required of OED.
- Collects and synthesizes information and data from various sources to be included in reports such as Performance Plan and Report (PPR), Operational Plans (OP), quarterly and annual reports, audit reporting, quarterly data calls from the Special Investigator General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR), briefing documents, cables, and ad hoc reporting requests for various audiences including USAID/Washington, Congress, and the U.S. Embassy.
- Conducts presentations on the education sector, program, projects, topics and issues to various USG, Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA), and other audiences, as needed.

5. Mentoring and Capacity Building

- The incumbent provides mentoring and capacity building support to Afghan CCN staff in various technical areas of education and in effective USAID project management, as needed. Responsible for providing day-to-day technical and procedural guidance to select CCN staff who are charged with the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of education activities.
- In coordination with the Mission Gender Advisor and OED CCN staff serving on the Mission Gender Team, analyzes ongoing and planned activities to ensure that USAID funded work addresses the needs and opportunities for the education of girls and women.

3) USAID Consultation or Orientation (if applicable):

The selected applicant shall proceed to the Washington, D.C. area for two weeks of mandatory training to complete the Foreign Affairs Counter Threat CT-650 (FACT) and the Afghanistan Familiarization RS-415 (FAM) courses (if FAM was not completed within the past five years and if FACT training did not include the ESCAPE Module) prior to proceeding to USAID/Afghanistan to commence duties as outlined in the statement of work. FACT and FAM are mandatory courses for service in Afghanistan.

4) Supervisory Relationship:

The incumbent supervises two to four senior CCN staff. Supervision includes providing technical and management guidance and mentoring to direct reports. This also includes defining roles and responsibilities within his/her team as well managing assignments, identifying staff training needs, and mentoring and coaching.

5) Supervisory Controls:

The Education Program Specialist will work under the supervision of the Education Office Director or his/her designee. The supervisor will review and approve the Education Program Specialist's annual work objectives and performance measures and provide periodic feedback and guidance. The supervisor also provides parameters on work priorities and technical and programmatic approaches in implementing the incumbent's work and those of his/her direct reports. The supervisor works with the incumbent to set deadlines and define delegated authorities, as applicable.

11. AREA OF CONSIDERATION:

According to ADS 309.3.3, a “USAID policy is that the use of CCNPSCs is preferred over the use of TCNPSCs in order to integrate the foreign assistance effort into the community, enhance the skills of the cooperating country's population, and contribute to the local economy. USPSCs are also preferred over TCNPSCs with equivalent qualifications.”

Therefore, United States National (USN) offerors will be evaluated in isolation first and only when/if there is no USN qualified, only then Third Country National (TCN) offerors will be considered.

For USPSC:

- Be a U.S. citizen or U.S. Permanent Resident (“green card holder”);
- Submit a complete application as outlined in the solicitation section titled APPLYING;
- Be able to obtain a Secret clearance (if U.S. Citizen), or Medium Risk Public Trust (MRPT) access authorization (if U.S. Permanent Resident);
- Be able to obtain a Department of State medical clearance (Class 1);
- Be available and willing to work additional hours beyond the established 40-hour workweek, including weekends, as may be required or necessary;
- Be willing to travel to work sites and other offices as/when requested;
- Employment is subject to funds availability and all the required approvals obtained.

For TCNPSC:

- Be a Third Country National. Third Country National means an individual: (1) Who is neither a citizen nor a permanent legal resident of the United States nor of the country to which assigned for duty (Afghanistan), and (2) Who is eligible for return to his/her home country or country of recruitment at U.S. Government expenses;
- Submit a complete application as outlined in the solicitation section titled APPLYING;
- Be able to obtain Medium Risk Public Trust (MRPT) access authorization;
- Be able to obtain a Department of State medical clearance (Class 1);
- Be available and willing to work additional hours beyond the established 40-hour workweek, including weekends, as may be required or necessary;
- Be willing to travel to work sites and other offices as/when requested.
- Employment is subject to funds availability and all the required approvals obtained.

12. PHYSICAL DEMANDS:

The primary location of work will be on the U.S. Embassy/USAID compound in Kabul, Afghanistan. No special physical demands are required to perform the work.

13. POINT OF CONTACT:

Any questions about this solicitation may be directed to: KblAIDHR@usaid.gov.

Note: No in-person appointments or telephone calls will be entertained, unless you are required to have more information about this solicitation.

II. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR THIS POSITION

In order to be considered for the position, a candidate must meet the Minimum Qualifications. Applications will be pre-screened and only those that meet the Minimum Qualifications will be considered. These are the minimum qualifications necessary to be considered for the position:

- a) **Education:** A Master's degree in international development, international relations/affairs, education/education management, economics, public policy, business administration is required. (Education requirements must be met at the time of application for the subject position).
- b) **Work Experience:** A minimum seven (7) years of progressively responsible experience, part of which in a supervisory role, in program/project management with a proven track record of programmatic accomplishment which includes program and/or activity management, planning and analytical skills in education programming. Experience managing programs/projects in basic education, early grade reading and math, girls' education, learning assessments, community-based/non-formal education, or tertiary education is required. (Work experience requirements must be met at the time of application for the subject position).

III. EVALUATION AND SELECTION FACTORS

The Evaluation Factors listed will be the basis for evaluating and ranking applicants for the position. Applicants will be scored based on the documentation submitted within the application. Applicants must submit a supplemental document outlining their responses to the evaluation factors in order to be considered. Only the highest-ranked applicants will be interviewed.

1. SELECTION PROCESS

After the closing date for receipt of applications, a committee will convene to review applications that meet the minimum requirements and evaluate them in accordance with the evaluation criteria. Applications from candidates who do not meet the minimum requirements will not be scored. As part of the selection process, finalist candidates will be interviewed. Reference checks will be made only for applicants considered as finalists. The applicant's references must be able to provide substantive information about his/her past performance and abilities. If an applicant does not wish USAID to contact a current employer for a reference check, this should be stated in the applicant's cover letter; USAID will delay such reference checks pending the applicant's concurrence.

2. EVALUATION FACTORS

Those applicants who meet the minimum education and experience qualifications will be evaluated based on the content of their application as well as on the applicant's writing, presentation, and communication skills. On a supplement document included with the application package, applicants should cite specific, illustrative examples to address each

factor. Responses are limited to 500 words (approx. 1/2 typewritten page) per factor. Applicants should describe specifically and accurately experience, training, education and/or awards they have received that are relevant to the factor. Applicants should include their name and the announcement number at the top of each additional page. Failure to specifically address the Evaluation Factors will result in the applicant not receiving full credit for pertinent experience.

FACTOR #1:

Technical and analytical expertise: demonstrated ability in the education program cycle, strategic planning, project/activity design, project implementation, monitoring and evaluation and learning, budget management, and effective reporting of program results. Demonstrated ability in preparing project related documents, supported by well-researched evidence.

FACTOR #2:

Coordination, collaboration and negotiations: demonstrated ability in working with the U.S. interagency, government officials, non-government leaders, civil society actors and other stakeholders in advancing education or similar programs and negotiating policy changes and reforms.

FACTOR #3:

Management and leadership skills: demonstrated ability to manage a team, supervise their work, define priorities, and follow-up on results. Show evidence of teamwork and leadership by example.

The Evaluation Factors listed will be the basis for evaluating and ranking applicants for the position. Applicants must submit a supplemental document outlining their responses to the evaluation factors in order to be considered. Only the highest-ranked applicants will be interviewed.

3. BASIS OF RATING

Applicants who clearly meet the Education/Experience requirements and basic eligibility requirements will be further evaluated based on scoring of their Evaluation Factor responses. Those applicants determined to be competitively ranked will also be evaluated on their interview performance and satisfactory professional reference checks. The Applicant Rating System is as follows:

Evaluation Factors

- Factor #1 20 points
- Factor #2 10 points
- Factor #3 10 points

Interview Performance 60 points

Interview questions will revolve around the candidate's ability to:

- Apply technical expertise and guide/mentor staff in education
- Manage and produce high quality program-cycle documents: strategies, project and activity design, M&E, and budget reports.
- work in a high risk, high intensity, constantly changing environment
- Work with multi-cultural teams to complete assignments and deliverables

Satisfactory Professional Reference Checks – Pass/Fail (no points assigned)

Total Possible Points: 100

IV. **APPLYING**

All applications must be submitted electronically by e-mail with the subject line **SOL-72030618B00020 – Education Program Specialist** to: AfgPSCjobs@usaid.gov

Attention: Executive Officer
USAID/Afghanistan
Human Resources Office

Applicants may submit an application against this solicitation prior the closing date and time specified in Section I, item 3 mentioned above unless revised. The highest ranking applications may be selected for an interview.

Qualified applicants must submit the following documents or their applications will not be considered for this position:

1. U.S. Government AID 302-3 (signed) form which is available at the following website: <https://www.usaid.gov/forms/aid-302-3>
2. A current curriculum vitae (CV) or resume.
3. A minimum of three (3) professional references with telephone and e-mail contacts, who are not family members or relatives, with working telephone and email contacts. The applicant's references must be able to provide substantive information about his/her past performance and abilities. At least one reference provided should be a current or former supervisor.
4. A supplemental document with written responses to the Evaluation Factors.

Candidates who are applying for this position must fully meet the education requirement (graduated and degree and/or diploma already received) as specified. At the time of applications, candidates must also meet in full the work experience requirement. There is no exception for these requirements.

Short-listed candidates will be requested to provide educational documents such as degrees, diplomas, certificates and other pertinent documents as needed. Failure to provide the required documentation will result in the rejection of their application from further consideration.

Please cite the solicitation number and position title within the subject line of your email application. Any attachments provided via email must be compatible with Microsoft Word 2003 or PDF and not zipped. Note that attachments to email must not exceed 3 MB.

Application letters and forms must be signed. Incomplete and unsigned applications/forms will not be considered.

Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

The Agency retains the right to cancel or amend the solicitation and associated actions at any stage of the recruitment process.

V. LIST OF REQUIRED FORMS FOR PSC HIRES

The Contracting Officer will notify the selected applicant and provide instructions regarding how to complete and submit the following forms:

1. Declaration for Federal Employment (OF-306)
2. Medical History and Examination Form (DS-6561)
3. Pre-Deployment Physical Exam Acknowledgement Form (DS-6570)
4. Questionnaire for Sensitive Positions for National Security (SF-86), or Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions (SF-85)
5. Finger Print Card (FD-258)

VI. BENEFITS/ALLOWANCES

As a matter of policy, and as appropriate, a PSC is normally authorized to the benefits and allowances listed in this section.

1. BENEFITS:

- 1) Contribution toward Health & life insurance
- 2) Pay Comparability Adjustment
- 3) Eligibility for Worker's Compensation
- 4) Annual & Sick Leave
- 5) Access to Embassy medical facilities, commissary and pouch mail service as per post policy

2. ALLOWANCES (If Applicable)*:

- 1) Temporary Lodging Allowance (Section 120)
- 2) Living Quarters Allowance (Section 130)
- 3) Post Allowance (Section 220)
- 4) Supplemental Post Allowance (Section 230)
- 5) Post Differential (Chapter 500)
- 6) Payments during Evacuation/Authorized Departure (Section 600)
- 7) Danger Pay (Section 650)
- 8) Education Allowance (Section 270)
- 9) Separate Maintenance Allowance (Section 260)
- 10) Education Travel (Section 280)

* Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians Foreign Areas).

*Eligibilities for allowances are in accordance with Standardized Regulations (Government Civilians Foreign Areas) based on the type of appointment and Mission Policy.

VII. TAXES

USPSC's are required to pay Federal income taxes, FICA, Medicare and applicable State income taxes.

VIII. USAID REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND CONTRACT CLAUSES PERTAINING TO PSCs

USAID regulations and policies governing USPSC and TCNPSC awards are available at these sources:

1. USAID Acquisition Regulation (AIDAR),

- **Appendix D**, "Direct USAID Contracts with a U.S. Citizen or a U.S. Resident Alien for Personal Services Abroad," including **contract clause "General Provisions,"**

- **Appendix J**, "Direct USAID Contracts with a Third Country National for Personal Services Abroad," including **contract clause "General Provisions,"** available at https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/aidar_0.pdf.

2. Contract Cover Page form AID 309-1 available at <https://www.usaid.gov/forms>.

3. Acquisition and Assistance Policy Directives/Contract Information Bulletins (AAPDs/CIBs) for Personal Services Contracts with Individuals available at <http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/aapds-cibs>.

4. Ethical Conduct. By the acceptance of a USAID personal services contract as an individual, the contractor will be acknowledging receipt of the "**Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch**," available from the U.S. Office of Government Ethics, in accordance with **General Provision 2** and **5 CFR 2635**.

See <https://www.oge.gov/web/oge/nsf/OGE%20Regulations>.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: The U.S. Mission provides equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment in employment to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, marital status, or sexual orientation. The Department of State also strives to achieve equal employment opportunity in all personnel operations through continuing diversity enhancement programs. The EEO complaint procedure is not available to individuals who believe they have been denied equal opportunity based upon marital status or political affiliation. Individuals with such complaints should avail themselves of the appropriate grievance procedures, remedies for prohibited personnel practices, and/or courts for relief.